THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

December/January 2023-24 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

A Jewish View

by Gabor Maté, M.D.

Editor's Note: Gabor Maté is a Canadian physician and author with a special interest in childhood development and trauma. He was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1944. His maternal grandparents were killed in Auschwitz, when Maté was five months old. His aunt disappeared during the war, and his father endured forced labour at the hands of the Nazis.

The following reflections by Dr. Maté were offered on September prior to the current crisis in Israel/ Palestine and on October 28, 2023.

I am a Holocaust survivor. I barely survived when I was still a five-month-old infant.

My grandparents were killed in Auschwitz, as well as most of my extended family.

I became a Zionist, this dream of the Jewish people resurrected in their historic homeland and the barbed wire of Auschwitz being replaced by the boundaries of a Jewish state with a powerful army.

And then I found out it wasn't exactly like that. In order to make this Jewish dream a reality, we would have to visit a nightmare on the local population.

There was no way you could have ever created a Jewish state without oppressing and expelling the local population. Israeli, Jewish historians have shown without a doubt that the expulsion of the Palestinians was persistent. It was pervasive. It was cruel. It was murderous. and with deliberate attempt. So, that's what's called the "Nakba" in Arabic: the "disaster" or the "catastrophe."

In Canada, there's a law that you cannot deny the Holocaust, but, in Israel, you are not allowed to mention the Nakba, even though it was at the very basis of the foundation of the state

And then, I visited the [Israeli] occupied [Palestinian] territories, during the first Intifada [Palestinian uprising].

I cried every day for two weeks at what I saw.

The brutality of the occupation, the petty harassments, the murderousness of it, the cutting down of Palestinian olive groves, the denial of water rights, the humiliations, and this went on and on, and it's much worse now than it was then.

It's the longest ethnic cleansing operation in the 20th and 21st centuries. It's still going on

I could land in Tel Aviv tomorrow and demand citizenship under the law of the Right of Return. But my Palestinian friend in Vancouver, Hanna Kawas, who was born in Jerusalem, can't even visit. Now, if I have the right to return after 2,000 years, how come Hanna doesn't have the right to return after 70 years?

So then you have these miserable people packed into this horrible place [Gaza]. People call it the world's largest outdoor prison, which is what it is.

You don't have to support Hamas

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The Lie of US-Them

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

Humans tend to demonize oppressors and lionize the oppressed. Once evil acts of a dominant group are exposed, its members can do nothing right. My Irish Catholic great grandparents' opinion of the British solidified when English landlords in Ireland made record profits on wheat and cattle while a million Irish Catholics starved to death. It took a very long time for many Irish Catholics to admit that the Irish Republican Army committed atrocities too on a smaller scale. Progressives tend to give resistance movements a pass. Worse yet, we are often seduced into the delusion that once the oppressed take power, utopia will necessarily ensue. We fail to remember the nightmare of the French Revolution or the more recent abuse by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, the darling of the left in the 1980s.

Naïvete allows us to assume that human beings are divided into good and bad groups. Mistreatment of indigenous children in Catholic residential schools and clerical sex abuse convinced many to put Catholics in the bad column. It's now commonplace to hear Native American concern for the earth and spirituality lauded. Similarly, people disgusted with the flaws of western religion sometimes idealize Eastern religions. Knowing the wrongs of familiar organizations can lead us to conclude that lesser known organizations are not just better, but pristine.

Little attention is paid to the horrific violence of Buddhists against Rohingya

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A Jewish View

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policies to stand up for Palestinian rights.

That's a complete falsity. I invite you to think of the worst thing you can say about Hamas. Multiply it by a thousand times and it will still not equal the Israeli repression, and killing, and dispossession of the Palestinians.

The narrative that anybody who criticizes Israel is an anti-Semite is simply an egregious attempt to intimidate good non-Jews who are willing to stand up for what is true.

When Hong Kong demonstrators throw stones at the police in Hong Kong, that's considered to be heroism in the American press. When, in Myanmar, demonstrators use slingshots against the oppressive army, they're also considered to be heroes in the western press. When Palestinian kids throw stones at Israeli soldiers, they are called terrorists. Israel gets away with a lot more with much less criticism in the western press than any other country.

I know a woman who runs a program for Palestinian prisoners who spent time in Israeli jails. Fourteen, fifteen, sixteen-year-olds are jailed for months or years. Sometimes they can't see their families for months.

My friend says, "We don't have a post-traumatic stress disorder here because the trauma is never post. The trauma is daily."

If you have any ounce of humanity left, you would cry like I did for two weeks when I was there. Anyone can go on YouTube and listen to Ilan Pappe, an Israeli historian. And we can listen to Norman Finklestein, a Jewish professor, a world expert on Gaza, who was denied tenure at his university because of his public speaking against Israeli policy. You can listen to any number of Israeli Defense Forces soldiers who talk about the brutality that they now regret having committed. You can listen to Israeli pilots who talk about why they refuse to fly over Gaza because of the atrocities they are made to commit. You can get all the information you want. So, if anybody these days doesn't know, it's not because the information is not available. Nothing excuses not knowing the truth.

I really wish non-Jews of good will would stand up against the calumny and not be intimidated by the charge of anti-Semitism. I really wish that. It's not a question of being pro-Palestinian. It's a question of "Are you in favor of justice, liberty, freedom, and truth, or are you not?"

Dr. Gabor's remarks made on October 28, 2023

Words fail me at this point. It's difficult to explain how I perceive the situation, but in a certain deep sense, I feel that it's the worst thing I've seen in my whole life. It's impossible to compare atrocities. Nothing compares with the mechanized murder of 5.6 million Jews by the Nazis. But what is different about the situation [in Gaza] is that I've never seen anything so publicly committed, such atrocities perpetrated on television,with the victims presented as the perpetrators. And this spectacle, this obscene, vicious spectacle, that we're subjected to is either supported or condoned by the major media and all the politicians. Ω

Never Again for Anyone

On November 7, hundreds of Jews and allies took over the Statue of Liberty with a clear demand: Ceasefire Now! The takeover on Liberty Island was led by Jewish Voice for Peace-NYC. Young people and elders, rabbis, descendants of Holocaust survivors, and elected officials sang "Ceasefire now" and carried banners that read, "The world is watching," "Palestinians should be free," and "Never again for anyone."

Jay Saper, a Jewish Voice for Peace organizer, said: "We came to the Statue of Liberty because we are inspired by the words of our Jewish ancestor, Emma Lazarus, that are etched into the monument. Those words compel us to take action to support the Palestinians of Gaza yearning to be free. We will continue to take action until we bring about a cease-fire and until Palestinians are free." Ω

Vol. 40, No. 3 **THE** **December/January 2023 -24**

CATHOLIC **RADICAL**

Published on 100% eucalyptus paper every two months by:

The Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker Community

52 Mason Street, Worcester, MA 01610

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Founded in 1933 by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, the Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.

On Pilgrimage

by Dorothy Day

Editor's Note: Excerpted from The Catholic Worker, February 1, 1969.

Reading is the oil that keeps the lamp burning, the Fathers of the Church wrote. So I recommend the **Peace Calendar: Readings for the Centenary of Gandhi's Birth**, edited by Mark Morris and put out by the War Resisters League. Martin Luther King's books, most of them in paperback, always inspire one with the hope, faith and love to continue the daily struggle.

We certainly must have the long view into the future to see and realize the awakening of the masses of people throughout the world and the growth of a new vision among them of a world which is personalist and communitarian. The great problem is: what means are to be used?

Thank God we are not living in that time when Africa was divided between all the European powers, and England, France, and Holland dominated the Far East, when nobody knew or cared that their comfort in the West was built on the blood, sweat, and tears of toilers of the world.

The battle at home now is to conquer the bitterness, the sense of futility and despair that grows among the young and turns them to violence, a violence which is magnified by the press, the radio, and television. We lose sight of the poor people's cooperatives and boycotts, the conquest of bread, as Kropotkin called it, which goes on daily in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, not to speak of California, Texas, and all the states where Mexicans have been imported for agricultural labor. They have come into our cities too, so that "workers and peasants" have united in the struggle, and the story of the grape pickers' nonviolent, long drawn out battle has reached Canada and the shores of Sweden and Finland, where dock workers have refused to unload the grapes picked by scab labor in California. Our own government, our enemy the State, has become the instrument of the growers in buying up the grapes and shipping them overseas to the troops in Vietnam.

The work of unionization, the formation of credit unions and cooperatives, especially cooperative housing, must go on, as must the work of building up hope and a sense in men [and women] of their own capacity for change, and for bringing about change.

Robert McGovern

The only thing that keeps hope alive is work, and study must go with it, to keep one's hope and vision alive.

I was talking to Mike Gold, my old Communist friend, when he returned from France with his wife and two sons years ago. Our Christian-Marxist dialogue went like this:

"My sons are named Karl and Nicholas," he reminded me as we spoke of his children and my grandchildren.

"My second grandson is called Nicholas too."

"But mine is named after a different person than yours. Mine is named after Lenin.

"Mine after the saint by that name and the Nicholases in Russia are too, though they may not know it."

So I stopped the argument, having had the last word, by inviting him over, and he brought me a present, a picture of Saint Anne, from Brittany, carefully rolled in a newspaper, so that it was flat for framing. While we stood in the Catholic Worker kitchen and talked, the dialogue continued:

I said: "How hard it is to have faith in men [and women] when we see their racist attitudes, their fears of each other fed by the daily press. There is a lot of racism around the Catholic Worker movement, made up as it is of men [and women] from the Bowery and skid rows, as well as from the colleges. Class war and race war go on daily, and we are a school for nonviolence." His eyes alight with faith, Mike said, "But it is the poor and the wretched, the insulted and the injured, who bring about the changes in the world, the great changes that are taking place."

I could not help but think that just as we cannot love God whom we do not see unless we love our brother [and sister] whom we do see, it followed that our faith in [humankind] (as we could be) should increase our faith in God and [God's] ever-present aid. "I can do all things in [God] who strengthens me." "Without [God] I can do nothing." And this very small conversation made me pray the more.

But how can we show our love by war, by the extermination of our enemies? If we are followers of Christ, there is no room for speaking of the "just war." We have to remember that God loves all men [and women], that God wills all [people] to be saved, that indeed all [humans] are brothers [and sisters]. We must love the jailer as well as the one in prison. We must do that seemingly utterly impossible thing: love our enemy....Ω

Us-Them

(Continued from Page 1)

Muslims in Myanmar or Inca and Aztec human sacrifice prior to the arrival of the conquistadors.

Us-Them thinking deludes us into assuming injustice is inately defeated by replacing a bad group with a good one. It has long been argued that the election of more women, people of color, and young people leads to Shangrala. We forget the cruelty of Idi Amin in Uganda and Margaret Thatcher in Britain. We must also bear in mind that Kim Jong Un was only 27 when he took command of North Korea.

While it is clear that governments should include fair representation of all members of society, it is not proven that certain groups are necessarily saints and others sinners.

As a Catholic Worker, I oppose the oppression of the Palestinians by Israel, but I do not display the Palestinian flag. I assume that my work to promote human rights in the Holy Land will continue under Palestinian rule and only diminish when a government, representing all those who call that land home is established.

I look to wise people like Jesus, Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Jacinda Ardern, who welcomed everyone. As prime minister of New Zealand, Ardern embraced policies of empathy, morality, and openness. Mandela accepted whites in his new government. Gandhi opposed Hindu nationalism. Jesus welcomed Samaritans, tax collectors, and Romans.

If the aftermath of a revolution features show trials and executions, the seeds are sown for the new regime's eventual overthrow. Pope Paul VI said, "If you want peace, work for justice." Revenge must never be confused with justice. The unspeakable evil of the Holocaust does not justify the oppression of the Palestinians. The murder of thousands of civilians on September 11th didn't justify the killing of hundreds of thousands in the Mideast. Confucius warned that anyone seeking revenge should "dig two graves." Violence never ends violence. While it appeared the US victory in World War II would usher in a Pax Americana, the Korean and Vietnam wars taught us otherwise.

On October 9, while speaking on Boston Common, Senator Ed Markey denounced the "heinous attacks" and "vicious murders" committed by Hamas against innocent civilians, children, and seniors, and called for the release of hostages, but was booed when he went on to say, "the United States and the international community must keep pushing for diplomacy and the ending of civilian casualties on all sides," and, "There must be a de-escalation of the current violence."

"NO!" The crowd seemed to say, "A hundred to one Palestinians must be killed. Only then will Israeli Jews be safe."

Markey's call for de-escalation in Israel-Palestine, like Pope Francis' call for negotiated peace in Ukraine, is denounced as appeasement at best and collaboration at worst. Few people look at history. Fewer recall the abysmal failure of the twenty years of ruthless US war on Iraq and Afghanistan. Millions dead. Trillions spent. Nothing accomplished.

"There no 'them' and 'us.' There is only us."

Fr. Greg Boyle, S.J.

Attempts to kill all the bad guys never work. Unless we understand the real and perceived injustices which motivate bad guys, we cannot vanquish their rage. We are less likely to do this when we forget that the Israeli and Palestinian victims and all perpetrators of violence are our siblings.

By digging deep into the hearts and histories of every person, we will find shameful examples of wrongdoing and laudatory examples of goodness. When we recall that the same God,who created and loves us, created and loves all those we hate, we will cease dividing humanity into us-them and work to amplify the goodness in everyone we meet. Ω

Yahweh Weeping

by Fr. Jim Consedine

Relentless attacks on Gaza
killer missiles showered
on multiple refugee camps
UN shelters, ambulances, mosques
hospitals, schools, churches
civilian areas so densely populated
it's impossible to escape
ethnic cleansing in full view

unimaginable trauma, grief
deaths in the thousands
ten times that number wounded
women in their homes, the elderly
a third at least infants, children
left bleeding in the streets
or squashed under rubble
like tomatoes after a hailstorm

daily raids in the West Bank
where an apartheid regime rules
no Hamas control here
ground troops kill at will
destroying civilian infrastructure
wrecking homes, terrorising people

racing around
like a chicken without a head
dancing to the tune of war criminals
Biden and Blinken's weasel words
fuel the burgeoning arms industry
whose only god is increased profits

poisoned by Zionist ideology
institutional lies, propaganda
betraying its rich heritage of faith
its ancient dream for justice
Israel's actions
leave Yahweh weeping

genocide by any other name
is still genocide. Ω

Armistice Day, November 11, 2023

9 Arrested Blocking Work on Nuclear Sub

Scott Schaeffer-Duffy and Ellen Grady

The Foundation for Defense of Democracies reported: "An Ohio-class [Trident] guided missile submarine arrived in the Middle East on November 5, according to a press release by the US Naval Forces Central Command. Capable of carrying up to 154 Tomahawk missiles, Ohio-class SSGNs [nuclear-powered guided missile submarines] combine significant long-range precision strike capacity with stealth, mobility, and a number of other capabilities. The United States often prefers to conceal the location of its submarines, but in this case, the Pentagon was eager to trumpet the submarine's arrival. The administration seeks to deter additional attacks on US. troops and dissuade Tehran and Hezbollah from launching a major war in Israel's north while the Jewish state is battling Hamas in Gaza."

The Trident submarine typically carries 48 independently-targeted nuclear warheads, each one eight times more destructive than the atomic bomb which killed 140,000 people in Hiroshima, Japan.

On November 13 at 6:30 AM, nine peace and justice makers, holding long banners declaring that nuclear weapons are illegal, were able to block the two main entrances of General Dynamics-Electric Boat nuclear submarine engineering complex in New London, Connecticut for about a half hour to call for the cancellation of the new Columbia-class nuclear submarine program and the abolition of nuclear weapons.

The activists also wheat-pasted Article 6 of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty on the driveway at both entrances. During the blockade, several activists wore safety vests alerting workers that the entrances were closed off, while other activists held banners and signs on the sidewalk, took photos, and passed out leaflets.

New London police arrested: Mark Colville of the Amistad Catholic Worker, New Haven, Connecticut; Bill Ofenloch of Saint Joseph's Catholic Worker, New York; NewYork; Ellen Grady of the Ithaca Catholic Worker, Ithaca, New York; Scott Schaeffer-Duffy of Saints Francis and Therese Catholic Worker, Worcester, Massachusetts; Art Laffin of the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington, DC; Jackie Allen-Doucot of the Hartford Catholic Worker, Hartford, Connecticut; Ed Kinane, Syracuse, New York; Dan Burgevin, Ithaca, New York; and Paul Magno, Washington, DC. The police also gave citations to John Bach, Boston, Massachusetts and Paki Weiland, Northampton, Massachusetts.

Those arrested were held at the New London police station for processing for up to 7 hours and then released. They were charged with criminal trespass, criminal mischief, and breach of peace. An arraignment date is set for November 27 in New London Superior Court.

All eleven of the demonstrators are part of the Atlantic Life Community (ALC), a network of faith-based activists. Members have protested at submarine christenings and launches from the 1970s into the early 1990s. They have now returned to New London to say NO to the spending of US\ taxpayer's money and resources for more death, destruction, and profiteering on the part of the weapons industry. The ALC demands that the US ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and that General Dynamics-Electric Boat be converted to non-military production to meet urgent human needs.

In a leaflet, the group said:

We come to the gates of General Dynamics-Electric Boat in New London, Connecticut today, when the United States has budgeted $114 billion dollars for the "upgrade" of the nuclear arsenal with 12 new Columbia-class submarines. The destructive capacity of

"Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

Jackie Allen-Douçot and Art Laffin

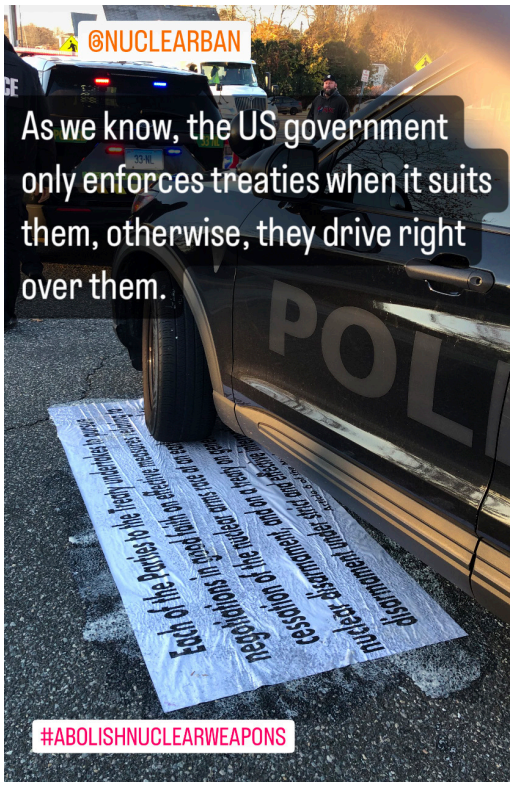
these nuclear submarines is unspeakable. The Columbia-class submarine program and the existing Trident program are a violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which the United States has signed and ratified, a treaty that commits us to work for complete disarmament. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists' *Doomsday Clock is set at 90 seconds to midnight. Columbia-class submarines will escalate war-making around the world. The production of these submarines ignores the global call for nuclear disarmament reflected in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), adopted by over 120 nations of the world community.*

Currently, the Israeli government is committing genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. The Pentagon has sent the USS Florida, an Ohio-class nuclear submarine, to the Middle East as a backup in support of the ethnic cleansing of Gaza. This comes at a time of great danger as we witness the perpetration of crimes against humanity through the wars in Ukraine, Palestine, Yemen, Somalia, and other countries around the world.

We say stop this madness and breach of international law and human decency. We say NO to the spending of US taxpayer's money and resources for more death, destruction, and profiteering on the part of the weapons industry. We say NO to the threat to creation to maintain US domination of global resources. We call on the US to ratify the TPNW. We call for the conversion of General Dynamics to non-military production to meet urgent human needs.

Let us put love into action and disarm our first-strike weapons of mass destruction. Let us heed Martin Luther King, Jr.: "The choice today is no longer between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence.

When asked why he joined the protest, Art Laffin said: "Pope Francis declared that the possession of nuclear weapons is immoral. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons deems nuclear weapons illegal under international law. I act today at General Dynamics-Electric Boat with my sisters and brothers to uphold God's law and international law and to prevent the unspeakable crime of nuclear weapons from ever being used. The estimated $114 billion budgeted for 12 Columbia class nuclear submarines is a theft from the poor and must be redirected to eradicate poverty and help end the climate crisis. It's a sin to build a nuclear weapon. The Columbia-class nuclear submarine program must be canceled. All nuclear weapons must be abolished now!"

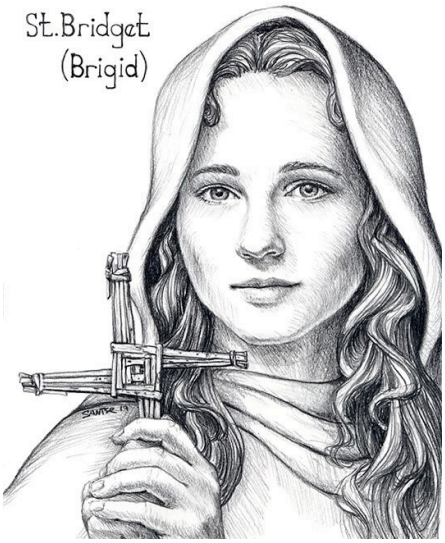

@NUCLEARBAN
As we know, the US government only enforces treaties when it suits them, otherwise, they drive right over them.
#ABOLISHNUCLEARWEAPONS

Ellen Grady said, "I came to General Dynamics-Electric Boat to uphold law— to get in the way of the illegal activity of building weapons of mass destruction— to call for all of us to uphold the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to work for nuclear disarmament."

Scott Schaeffer-Duffy said: "We are threatening nuclear annihilation on any country which defies Israel's war on Gaza. If we continue doing so and approve additional military aid to Israel while this mass killing and displacement of Palestinians is going on, we will be remembered for generations as collaborators in mass murder. All people of conscience need to stand in the way of these bloody plans, and work for genuine peace with justice for all. If we have to go to jail to accomplish this, so be it." Ω

Pause for Peace

by Michael Caldwell



Christopher Santer

Ireland's Solas Bhride [Light of Brigid] Center and Into Kildare, the Kildare Tourism Board, jointly launched a global Pause for Peace movement on January 12, 2023. The Pause for Peace movement invites people from around the world to stop and pause for one minute's silence/ reflection at noon local time on Saint Brigid's Day, February 1, 2024.

Sister Rita Minehan of the Solas Bhride Center said: "The Pause for Peace reflects a spiritual underpinning to the [Irish] national holiday in honor of Saint Brigid and is consistent with the value of peace which Saint Brigid stood for in her time. By pausing for peace, we send out a message that we actively oppose warfare and the proliferation of arms in our world."

The Pause for Peace will be a rolling event beginning in New Zealand and moving seamlessly through continents and islands at noon local time on Saint Brigid's day each year.

Solas Bhride was delighted to welcome An Taoiseach, Leo Varadikar [the Irish Prime Minister] to Solas Bhride on January 27, to show his support for Pause for Peace.

The President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins stated, "This new Pause for Peace movement is a unique event which breaks new ground in recognizing the cultural and historical importance of Saint Brigid beyond boundaries and aims to form a spirit of solidarity and peace in societies all over the globe."

2024 marks the 1,500th anniversary of the death of Saint Brigid, who was named the first woman bishop. The Pause for Peace movement will be a significant event in the 2024 calendar and thereafter on Saint Brigid's Day each year. Ω

Editor's Note. Saint Brigid, the female patron saint of Ireland, is the first native-born Irish saint. Famous for her generosity to the poor and feisty defiance of men who stood between her and the works of mercy, she founded a monastery for women and another for men.

Among many things, Brigid was known for her love of celebration and beer. Legend has it that, when the spirit ran out, she changed well-water into ale.

A poem, attributed to Saint Brigid, recorded in an 8th century manuscript preserved in a Brussels library follows:

"I should like a great lake of the finest ale for the King of kings.

I should like a table of the choicest food for the family of heaven.

Let the ale be made from the fruits of faith, and the food be forgiving love.

I should welcome the poor to my feast, for they are God's children.

I should welcome the sick to my feast, for they are God's joy.

Let the poor sit with Jesus at the highest place, and the sick dance with the angels."

An early 9th century biography says that, when Brigid went before Bishop Mel to be proclaimed a nun, he read the wrong prayers and proclaimed her a bishop. When asked afterwards why he did so, Bishop Mel said, "The Holy Spirit took the matter out of my hands." Brigid is often portrayed with a bishop's staff.

Letters

Brian Kavanagh

Dear Claire and Scott,
Biden and Blinkin's response to the conflict [between Hamas and Israel] is to send more weapons to Israel—a country that this year is already receiving 3 billion in aid.

Sending fighter jets is a knee jerk reaction.

In my view, this country bears a good deal of responsibility for Israel's mistreatment of the Palestinians. Now, a great number of them will be killed and injured as Netanyahu prosecutes his war with US weaponry. "I need more weapons, Joe!" And Netanyahu will declare any Palestinian casualty "a terrorist" or someone who "harbored a terrorist."

Likely, Biden is looking to appease a voting block in this country. He's no friend of the Palestinians.

Certainly, it is a sad day for Israelis and Palestinians. And will be followed by many more days of sadness.

Regrettably, the killed and injured are casualties of years of a failure of leadership and compassion.

David Maher
North Brookfield, Massachusetts

Editor's Note: David Maher is one of thousands of Americans who traveled to the Israeli-occupied territories with human rights groups like the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. Mr Maher knows from experience about the violence of Israel against Palestinians. His letter arrived on October 9, the same day as the following letter, by Ken Galal of San Francisco, appeared in The NY Times*:*
"The latest Israeli-Palestinian violence is a tragic but inevitable outcome of decades of American indulgence of illegal and immoral

Israeli policies that have hardened attitudes and relegated Palestinians to a stateless people living under apartheid conditions.

Ironically, while our country rushes to sanction and isolate Russia for its illegal invasion of Ukraine, we help finance Israel's illegal occupation while blocking United Nations' sanctions that would hold Israel accountable for violating Palestinian human rights and international law."

Dear Scott,
...Very impressed by the recent article on gender and orientation Hardly a simple subject. Your charity shines through.

Phil Brewer
Rutland, Massachusetts

Dear Scott,
I read your very thoughtful column regarding Bishop McManus's recent actions related to moral questions regarding same-sex relationships and gender-identity. These are not simple moral issues and you treat them with the care they deserve. After all, we are talking about real people dealing with real struggles.

Yet, like many, I fear you have succumbed to the cultural zeitgeist. I have struggled as well to keep my head above the cultural waters. The Earthly City and the City of God have very different agendas. When I am struggling with a Church teaching that doesn't seem to make sense, that doesn't seem right, I find it helpful to dig deeper and try to better understand the mind of Mother Church, which is the mind of Christ. Regarding issues related to human sexuality, there are several Church documents that I find helpful in forming my conscience in this area: St. John Paul II's profound "Theology of the Body," "Persona Humana—Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics," and "Letter to the Bishops on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons." All are well worth prayerful study—especially for anyone struggling to understand the recent actions of our Bishop.

John Howland, M.D.
Southbridge, Massachusetts

Editor's Note: In an email to Dr. Howland, Scott Schaeffer-Duffy wrote: "I would feel better about Bishop McManus if he showed leadership on climate change, gun violence, nuclear disarmament, workers' rights, and immigration. When he speaks so forcefully on sexual issues and neglects others which are dear to the heart of Pope Francis, it comes across, not as faithful Catholic, but as ardent Republican. He told Nativity School that they could not call themselves Catholic, but said nothing similar to Holy Cross about its ROTC program to put students in the US nuclear navy. The Pope called the approach of conservative bishops "an act of ideology, not faith."

Doctor Howland replied:

Dear Scott,
That's the column you perhaps should have written! Sometimes our biggest mistakes are ones of omission, not commission. I couldn't agree more that many Catholics have been swept up into the Republican/conservative/MAGA orbit. Yet despite that, Bishop McManus is our bishop, our shepherd.

The Catholic Catechism, says: *The Good Shepherd ought to be the model and "form" of the bishop's pastoral office. Conscious of his own weaknesses, "the bishop . . . can have compassion for those who are ignorant and erring. He should not refuse to listen to his subjects whose welfare he promotes as of his very own children. . . . The faithful . . . should be closely attached to the bishop as the Church is to Jesus Christ, and as Jesus Christ is to the Father."*

Let all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ follows his Father, respect the deacons as you do God's law. Let no one do anything concerning the Church in separation from the bishop.

We may disagree with some of his actions/inactions, but should treat him with respect as is due his office. And I think you have managed to do that—something I admire.

John Howland MD

Dear Scott, Claire, and all,
Reading your article "Bishop Prompts Responses," Scott, I was struck by how true it is that what is politically and culturally acceptable is very narrowly defined by both left and right, and what a relief it is to hear a voice (other than my own!) that fits neither. At times, I start to accuse myself of just trying to do the impossible and keep everyone happy by agreeing with aspects of both sides, but reading what you wrote helped me remember that it doesn't make me neutral or on-the-fence to not entirely agree with two narrow points of view!

The constant balancing act between loving acceptance and not being a push-over can be exhausting at times, but I think it can lead to greater well-being in both ourselves and those around us than if we just held hard and fast to ideologies (especially ones we've inherited without question!). Even once we think we've found our balancing point, it may need to change!

Like you, I would question giving transgender teenagers hormone or surgical treatment. However, my 15-year-old cousin has gone through that process and, so far, only good seems to have come of it, and he has been spared years of feeling forced by society into a role that didn't fit. I don't know what the long-term negative effects might be, but they'd have to be a major to outweigh the emotional, mental, and social benefits right now. Wouldn't it be great if young people didn't grow up being targeted by advertisement/commercialism/social pressure telling them how they should look and act and what they should want to be, according to what body they were born into? My three-year-old son has a natural love of bright rainbow-colored clothes. I often think of how much this simple delight would be often squashed out, particularly, in the past....

The situation in Palestine and Israel is so heartbreaking. I nearly cried when a good friend said to me, "Do you know that supporting Palestine could look like you support Hamas?" I nearly cried again — but this time with gratitude— when someone I hardly knew said, "For me, it's a matter of the rich and the poor, and if the rich are bombing hospitals, that's not right." We've had a few public gatherings, which I hope have clarified any mistaken impressions that we support Hamas or hate the Jews!

It's felt surreal to carry on life as usual, knowing what's going on over there. When Nerida (our eldest, now 9) was 4, she said

that, when she's an adult, she will go to where there are wars and tell people to stop. Her favorite song at the moment is "Free Palestine" by Lowkey. But what will be left by then? (As it happens, Nerida's middle name is Corrie, after Rachel Corrie, a 23-year-old, who was killed in 2003 when she stood in the way of an Israeli bulldozer demolishing a Palestinian home).

Kiera Land
WhirinAki
Aotearoa (New Zealand)

Dear Claire and Scott,
After reading your insert and looking at your banner, I didn't notice anything at first. Even when you pointed it out, I still read "Catholic Workers say…" I still didn't see it! And then in your email to Grace I thought you were saying "Catholicic" is a real thing among progressive Catholic(ics). "Now, why would they do that?" I thought. I realized I was still missing something, so finally I looked closely and saw it! It just goes to show you how influenced we are by what we expect to see. I think there's a term for that—expectation bias?

Paul Del Junco
Toronto, Canada

Dear Friends,
Reading "Oops" reminded me of a banner I made for Nevada which read "Peace in the Dessert."

Joan Monastero
Saugerties, New York

Dear Editors,
Your photo of Native American children in a boarding school reminded me of a photo given to me by my dad. It that photo, he and his twin brother are standing in the front row among classmates at a Catholic elementary school. They were evangelized about sin and water moccasins [snakes], something to be concerned about when you are shoe-less and clueless in West Texas. They learned to read and spell in English in order to assimilate better into US society. Their mom spoke Polish and their dad spoke Czech....

I learned how to spell my name with the help of the good Sisters.

Michael Marek
Jonah House Catholic Worker
Dallas, Texas

To the Editors,
I read the article by Craig Simpson on Massachusetts Catholics for Indigenous Rights. After reflection, I realized we will never know the complete true story of what happened.... However, my memories of the Church's mission with Native Americans was reading about Sister Catherine Labour and all the great work she did in the 1800s to help them,

I also must mention Thanksgiving — where Native Americans helped the white, separatist, privileged people. and celebrated a beautiful three-day meal with them. This feast has lived on in our country and should be an inspiration to all of us to work for peace, love, and acceptance of one another....

If it wasn't for Squanto, the Native American who was physically taken, and trafficked with other natives against their wills, there would have been no Thanksgiving Day. Once taken from his home in Plymouth, he was sold in Spain to Catholic monks, who baptized him and taught him the faith.... Yearning to get back home, the friars made arrangements to get him to England where he stayed a couple of years and then came back to Massachusetts.

He learned that his whole village was wiped out from the plague, and lived with another tribe in the area. When the separatists landed in Plymouth, he went to help them and teach them how to live. He knew the language well. Squanto never showed or expressed any hatred or animosity at what was done to him and his tribe by the English. He loved the new "pilgrims" and without him they probably would have died.

Governor Bradford said, "Squanto was a gift sent to us from God for our benefit," a very powerful statement from a separatist who considered Native Americans savages. Squanto made enemies with the pro-gun Myles Standish and some of the Indians under chief Massasoit. According to Nathanel Philbrick he was probably poisoned by his own people.... When Squanto was about to die, he asked Governor Bradford to pray that he go to the Englishman's heaven. Squanto knew of intercessory prayer.

God Bless Squanto. There is much love, peace, and forgiveness in his story.

Alfred DuBois
Clifton, New Jersey

Editor's Note: Like many stories from the colonial period, the story of Tisquantum, the native American whites called Squanto, has come under scrutiny in recent years, but we believe it still remains unchallenged that his assistance saved lives. Since Scott Schaeffer-Duffy's ancestor, William Brewster, the elder of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower, may well have perished without that assistance, it behooves him and all of us to honor those ancestors of Tisquantum who still live in our midst.

Although the Thanksgiving story has also taken some hits in recent years, we still see the value in setting aside a special day to share a meal with family gathered to thank God for our blessings.

Catholic Worker Calendar

December 13, January 3 & 17— Evening Prayer: Please come join us for silent meditation, prayer, and Taizé chant at 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow. 7 PM.

December 23 — Christmas Caroling- Meet at 52 Mason Street at 5:30 PM too practice. Milled cider and Chirstmas cookies to follow.

Every Tuesday—Vigil for Peace: Lincoln Square. Worcester 3:30-4:30 PM.

Mason Street Musings

Bethlehem captures the world's attention during Advent and Christmas as the town where Jesus was born. Since mid-October, we have heard often from George Rishmawi, a dear friend who lives just outside of Bethlehem, about the dramatic increase in Israeli military and Jewish settler violence since the Hamas attack on October 7. With over 1,400 Israelis and 12,000 Palestinians dead, at this writing, and no end of killing in sight, it doesn't seem like a very holy land, not to mention an appropriate launching point for the Prince of Peace.

And yet, this place where Roman occupiers once oppressed and crucified Jewish and other opponents and Israeli occupiers now impoverish, displace, jail without charge, torture, and kill Palestinians with impunity, and lavish US military and political support, this place is the site where God chose to become one of us. At times like this, the incarnation in Bethlehem can seem a cruel joke. What hope can there be for a message of peace on earth and goodwill to humanity in a place of such protracted cruelty?

But when we poke through the media's insistence that Israel/Palestine is a trapped in an unbroken cycle of endless violence, a patent untruth, we discover Jews and Palestinians who have long said in unison "Never Again to Anyone!" Our friend George has seen enough brutality to succumb to internecine hate, but refuses to do so. A Holocaust survivor, Dr. Gabor Maté courageously refuses to be mastered by revenge. He's like Israeli Jews, who lost loved ones on October 7, and are still calling for a ceasefire.

The second chapter of the Book of Wisdom tells us: "**The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God... God has tested them like gold in the furnace and accepted them as a holocaust. When time comes for God's visitation they will shine out**...." In the same way that Christians believe Jesus' offer of forgiveness from the cross is a timeless victory of life over death, the actions of loving and nonviolent people under extreme duress can save humanity from God's wrath.

In fact, when people repent from evil, like the German nation did after World War II, God does not hold their previous transgressions against them. Just like shaking an etch a sketch, God wipes our transgressions away. Only those who persist in defending evils, like the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the fire-bombing of Dresden, and the massacre of two million people in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, are condemned to the hell which hatred and violence makes of existence.

Jesus birth in Bethlehem represents God's outstretched merciful hand to creation adrift in a maelstrom. We are not doomed to perpetual violence. God promises that every tear will ultimately be wiped away. The worse things are, the brighter will our lights shine in the darkness. Not one innocent life lost goes unnoticed by God. Paradise is not only possible, but inevitable.

Yes, "In the dark street shining, the everlasting Light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight."

Blessed Advent and Christmas! Ω

Scott

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